

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

**COVERING THE PERIOD:**

**SEPTEMBER 2013 - SEPTEMBER 2014**

Heart of the Matter Program

Save a Child's Heart



PRESENTED TO



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<b>1. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. YEAR 1 PROGRAM SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Program Objectives.....	4
Program Accomplishments for the Reporting Period .....	4
<b>3. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Summary.....	5
October 2013-September 2014 Outputs.....	5
Activity 1: Outreach Training Program .....	7
<i>Partnership with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and the Palestine Medical Complex.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Training of Palestinian Physicians at the Wolfson Medical Center .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Psychosocial and Conflict Mitigation Training .....</i>	<i>11</i>
Activity 2: Joint Medical Activities .....	13
<i>International Medical Conferences .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Local Seminars .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Equipment Purchase .....</i>	<i>16</i>
Activity 3: Support and Dialogue Group .....	16
<i>Dialogue Group Sessions.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Capacity Building and Conflict Mitigation Training .....</i>	<i>19</i>
Activity 4: Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program.....	20
Activity 5: Change in Perception Survey and Report .....	22
Survey Company Selection Process.....	22
<b>4. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5. CHALLENGES.....</b>	<b>26</b>
First quarter.....	26
Second Quarter .....	26
Third Quarter .....	26
Fourth Quarter .....	27
<b>6. PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPACT .....</b>	<b>28</b>

## **1. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Save a Child's Heart (SACH) is an international, non-profit organization, based in Israel, with the mission of improving the quality of pediatric cardiac care for children from around the world. Founded in 1996, SACH provides life-saving heart surgeries and follow-up care for as many children as possible while simultaneously creating centers of medical competence in developing countries that enables local physicians, trained by SACH, to treat patients from their own communities. SACH is dedicated to the principle that every child deserves the best medical treatment available, regardless of the child's nationality, religion, gender or financial situation. All SACH cardiac care medical procedures and training activities take place at the Wolfson Medical Center (WMC) in Holon, Israel, an affiliate of the Sackler School of Medicine at the Tel Aviv University.

To date, SACH has saved the lives of over 3,400 children, approximately 200 children per year, from 48 developing countries in Africa, South America, Europe, Asia and throughout the Middle East, including the Palestinian Authority – West Bank and Gaza, as well as Iraq and Syria. Nearly half of the children treated by SACH are from the Palestinian Authority (PA), West Bank and Gaza. Since its establishment, SACH has also trained nearly 100 physicians and nurses from 16 countries in Israel. This training improves the skills and builds the capacity of medical personnel in developing countries, making pediatric care more available and accessible in local communities in these countries. SACH travels annually to partner sites in developing countries to hold joint cardiology clinics with its partner cardiologists for children awaiting surgery and for children who have undergone surgery in the past.

The Heart of the Matter program, SACH's flagship program, aims to improve relations among Palestinians and Israelis by providing increased encounters between both populations through joint activities in the health sector and by working together towards improving pediatric cardiac care in the PA. The Heart of the Matter program's overall objective is to contribute to the reduction of the effects of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis by focusing on issues of common concern and by changing the perception of one another through collaboration and cooperation within the health sector. This overall objective is gradually achieved by increasing the interaction between Palestinians and Israelis working towards building institutional health-related capacity of the PA by (1) providing increased encounters between Palestinian and Israeli medical personnel with the shared goal of building a self-sustaining capacity in pediatric cardiac care within the West Bank, (2) enabling opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis who share a common interest in the health sector and (3) building upon already established direct civil society relationships and inter-governmental cooperation related to the field of medicine. The Heart of the Matter program works with Palestinian and Israeli medical personnel and children despite political deterioration in the region, as demonstrated during the Summer 2014 violence during the third quarter of this USAID grant. The program has successfully integrated both top-down government led and bottom-up grassroots led cooperation by increasing the interactions and relationship on a people-to-people level as well as institution-to-institution level of intervention. This was demonstrated throughout the past year between Palestinian and Israeli youth, children's caretakers and medical physicians, hospitals, and governmental institutions.

## 2. YEAR 1 PROGRAM SUMMARY

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide training, knowledge and expertise in the field of pediatric cardiac care;
- To facilitate joint medical activities between medical personnel from the Palestinian Authority (PA), Israel and the international medical community;
- To facilitate programs bringing together Palestinian and Israeli families and youth through the provision of pediatric medical treatment in Israel in the short term and in Palestinian hospitals in the long term.

### PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD

- SACH held an opening ceremony for the Heart of the Matter program at the British Ambassador to Israel's Home where USAID's support for the program was recognized;
- Five Palestinian physicians from the West Bank were accepted to SACH's training program and underwent training at the WMC. The physicians specialize in radiology (1), PICU (1), cardiac surgery (2) and pediatric cardiology (1);
- SACH hired Dr. Yitzhak Levav, a consultant on psychosocial factors in health as the program Conflict Mitigation Specialist;
- Dr. Levav and volunteer expert advisor on conflict management aspects, Dr. Jeff Hoffman, developed a CareComm training manual for direct program beneficiaries, specifically Palestinian physicians trained at WMC through the Outreach Training Program. The training manual hones into conflict mitigation aspects in the health sector and relations between Palestinians and Israelis in medical settings;
- SACH sent six physicians, three Palestinian and three Israeli, to international medical conferences in Vienna, Paris and Helsinki. Each seminar was jointly attended by one Palestinian physician and one Israeli physician;
- SACH held one medical conference in the field of pediatric cardiology, jointly attended by pediatricians and cardiologists from the West Bank and Israel;
- SACH held two meetings of the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee, a Committee established to oversee and monitor program outputs and the relationship between the WMC and the Palestine Medical Complex (PMC);
- SACH finalized the medical equipment pieces to be purchased for the WMC and PMC;
- A new framework for the Support and Dialogue Group was developed and implemented throughout this reporting period;
- SACH held 22 Support and Dialogue Group sessions between Palestinian and Israeli parents and caretakers whose children are hospitalized at the WMC;
- SACH established an informal relationship with WMC's Children's Playroom in an effort to recruit Israeli families for the Support and Dialogue Group activities;
- A new framework and program for the Seeds of Peace (SoP) Joint Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program was developed and implemented during this reporting period;
- Twelve SoP volunteer days were held with thirty one volunteers at the WMC's free clinic for Palestinian children;
- Dr. Levav researched and designed questionnaires to examine the SoP Joint Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program's effectiveness;
- SACH commissioned Midgam, a survey company, to run the program's external evaluation;

### 3. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### SUMMARY

The first year of the Heart of the Matter program, supported in part by the United States Agency of International Development (USAID), was dedicated to implementing program activities, developing reporting frameworks and building cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli participants.

The most significant outcome of the first year of the program has been the establishment of a successful working relationship with the Palestine Medical Complex (PMC) and Palestinian Ministry of Health (PMOH). The PMC is a major stakeholder in the program; all Palestinian medical personnel trained through Heart of the Matter will be employed by the PMC, and all medical equipment purchased will be used by the PMC to improve the pediatric cardiac care services to Palestinian children.

While major progress was made in some program outputs, the armed conflict during July and August, which were immediately followed by Muslim and Jewish holidays, resulted in a significant delay in meetings between Palestinian and Israeli medical personnel, medical seminars, and the implementation of the pilot phase of the external evaluation. It is important to highlight that during surges of violence in the region, especially in the third quarter of this United States grant (USG), SACH continually provided medical services to Palestinian children and training to Palestinian medical personnel from the West Bank and Gaza.

The program is internally and externally evaluated to examine long and short term impact on Palestinian and Israeli participants. The program is internally monitored and evaluated by Dr. Levav, a Conflict Mitigation Specialist. All program participants are obliged to submit feedback which Dr. Levav evaluates. His reports will be made available to stakeholders, including USAID, upon request. The program is externally evaluated by Midgam, led by Dr. Mina Zemach, with the guidance and supervision of Dr. Levav. SACH commissioned Midgam, a leading Israeli survey company, during the first year of this USG, to study the program's effect on attitudes.

#### OCTOBER 2013-SEPTEMBER 2014 OUTPUTS

Activity	Estimate	Actual
Activity 1 – Medical Training Program - Implement an outreach training program for Palestinian physicians.	5 training positions filled	A total of five Palestinian physicians, all from the West Bank, participated in the outreach training program at the WMC. The physicians trained in radiology (1), PICU (1), cardiac surgery (2) and pediatric cardiology (1).
Activity 2 - Joint Medical Activities - Consultation on cases during face-to-face meetings, through telephone calls or during quarterly visits to the WMC or Palestinian Ministry of Health (PMOH) facility such as the PMC.	4 meetings will be held annually	Two meetings of the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee were held at the WMC. The first meeting was held on March 4 <sup>th</sup> and the second meeting was held on September 22 <sup>nd</sup> . Representatives from the WMC, PMC and SACH participated in each of the meetings.
Activity 2 - Joint Medical Activities	2 medical seminars with 15	No medical seminars were held this

- Host medical seminars with Palestinian and Israeli physicians participating together.	Palestinian and 15 Israeli medical personnel.	year. The target number of medical seminars for year 1, two seminars in total, are delayed to year 2 of the program.
Activity 2 - Joint Medical Activities - Attendance at international medical conferences	1 Palestinian physician and 1 Israeli physician attending 2 international medical conferences abroad for a total of 4 physicians over the course of the year	Three Palestinians and three Israelis participated in three international medical conferences. One Palestinian physician and one Israeli physician participated in the 2014 European Congress of Radiology in Vienna in March 2014; one Palestinian physician and one Israeli physician participated in Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) & Euro ELSO 2014 conference in Paris in May 2014; and one Palestinian and one Israeli physician participated in the 48 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association for European Paediatric and Congenital Cardiology conference in Helsinki in May 2014.
Activity 2 - Joint Medical Activities - Purchase medical equipment for the WMC and the PMOH that will enable joint examinations, evaluations and treatment of children, followed by consultations and ongoing work relations.	To purchase for the Palestinian Medical Complex: Echocardiograph Ultrasound Machine, Blood Vessels Ultrasound, Blood Gas Machine and Airway Mobilescope.  To purchase a new heart-lung machine for the WMC	SACH continued to work in cooperation with the PMOH and the PMC to finalize the medical equipment that will be purchased through this USG. The PMC submitted a list of equipment pieces it is interested in purchasing under this program during the meeting held with WMC and SACH on September 22 <sup>nd</sup> . The list is currently under review by SACH.
Activity 3 - Facilitate a weekly support and dialogue group for Palestinian and Israeli families, whose children are hospitalized at the WMC for any medical condition.	A weekly support and dialogue group will be held for approximately 60 Palestinian and Israeli family members, with children hospitalized at the WMC for any medical condition.	SACH led 22 support and dialogue group sessions at WMC with 65 Palestinian and Israeli parents and caretakers whose children are hospitalized at WMC. The sessions provide parents with a safe and emotionally supportive place to discuss their child's hospitalization and medical condition.
Host a joint Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program at the WMC with SACH's sub-awardee, Seeds of Peace.	2 Palestinian and 2 Israeli youth will jointly volunteer at the WMC Palestinian cardiology clinic at least twice a month. The total will be 48 youth, 24 Palestinian and 24 Israeli who volunteer and assist the	Twelve volunteer days, with 31 volunteers, were held at WMC in partnership with SoP youth volunteers. The volunteer days are jointly attended by Palestinian and Israeli graduates of the SoP

	families and medical staff at the WMC throughout the year.	International Camp. The volunteer days contribute to the youth's leadership skills and help mitigate anxiety of Palestinian children during the Tuesday Free Clinic for Palestinian children from the West Bank and Gaza.
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## ACTIVITY 1: OUTREACH TRAINING PROGRAM

### *PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PALESTINIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE PALESTINE MEDICAL COMPLEX*

Through Heart of the Matter the PMOH and PMC receive the facilities and training to develop a state of the art center for pediatric cardiac care in the West Bank. PMOH involvement in the program increased during the first year, especially with their role overseeing the outreach training program. Dr. Wafiq Othman, the SACH Palestinian Program Coordinator, has been working closely with PMOH officials to gain their full support and commitment to the program.

To promote the newly established partnership between the PMC, SACH and the WMC, SACH established the Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee. The Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the relationship between the two medical institutions. It is also responsible for overseeing Palestinian medical staff training at the WMC, the treatment of Palestinian children at the WMC and the purchase of medical equipment for both medical institutions through Heart of the Matter.

The first Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting took place on March 4, 2014. Participants at the meeting included Dr. Ahmad Darwaze, PMC Director of Cardiac Surgery, Dr. Mohammad Adie, PMC Director of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery, Ayman Anaya, Palestinian Ministry of Health Official, Dr. Yitzhak Berlowitz, Director of the WMC, Dr. Lior Sasson, WMC Head of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Dr. Sion Hourri, WMC Director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Dr. Wafiq Othman, Palestinian Physician Coordinator for SACH, and Simon Fisher, Executive Director of SACH. At the meeting, Dr. Darwaze and Dr. Adi met with the five Palestinian doctors currently participating in the SACH medical training program. The physicians shared their experiences as trainee doctors of the program, including the benefits of attending international medical conferences overseas.

Following the first Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting, Dr. Othman met with Dr. Darwaze on March 11, 2014 to discuss PMC's involvement in the program. It was agreed that in order to finalize collaborative efforts between the PMC and WMC a meeting would be organized with the Palestinian Ministry of Health Dr. Jawad Awad.

On April 28, 2014 Dr. Othman met with Dr. Mohammad Abu Ghali, Director of Hospitals at the PMOH, to discuss the program's progress and to see how the PMOH can continue its support for the doctors' training at WMC following the successful first Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting. One issue that was successfully resolved at this meeting concerned payment for trainee physicians. During the Palestinian physicians' training in Israel, the PMOH pays the Palestinian physicians a basic salary. Dr. Othman voiced

SACH's concern over delayed payments during the months of April and May. Following this meeting, the payment arrangement for the physicians was settled.

Dr. Othman met with Dr. Awad following the meeting with Dr. Abu Ghali to clarify SACH's requirements in accordance to USAID regulations regarding hospitalization services available to Palestinian children and the outreach training program for Palestinian physicians through Heart of the Matter. Dr. Othman and Dr. Awad examined the relationship status between PMC and WMC following the first Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting on March 4, 2014. Dr. Othman reiterated the interlinking program elements and the importance of referring Palestinian children to WMC not only for life saving treatment, but also because this is an important learning opportunity for Palestinian physicians' medical training experience. As a direct result of this conversation, two children from the West Bank were immediately transferred to WMC for treatment.

On June 9, 2014 Dr. Othman met with Dr. Ahmad Betawe, Director of PMC, to prepare for the second Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting and to examine the long-term benefits of the outreach training program on PMC. The two physicians also discussed the training status of each of the Palestinian physicians training at WMC through the Heart of the Matter program. PMC and PMOH raised concerns over the status of Dr. Wreidat's licensing and the possibility that he will obtain a practicing position at PMC following the training at the WMC. Dr. Wreidat's licensing has been an issue of concern throughout the third quarter of the program. On June 26, SACH sent a letter to Dr. Betawe requesting a meeting with him and the PMOH to discuss joint cooperation between SACH, PMOH, PMC and WMC.

On September 22, 2014, representatives from SACH, WMC, PMOH and PMC held the second Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting at WMC. During the meeting, the representatives reviewed the progress of each of the physicians that was training at WMC at the time and the development of a new residency program as part of SACH's Heart of the Matter program. PMOH informed WMC that it will discontinue Dr. Wreidat's training, as of September 22, 2014, due to Dr. Wreidat's violation of licensing and documentation agreements with PMOH. A letter to this effect, dated September 21, 2014, was submitted by PMOH to SACH. Further discussion on this matter is outlined in the next section.

Dr. Ahmad Betawe stressed the importance of fully integrating the physicians trained through this program into their respective departments at PMC upon completion of training. Dr. Betawe explained that Dr. Wreidat's experience serves as an important example for both PMC and WMC. Dr. Betawe highlighted the importance of meeting both PMOH and PMC admissions criteria to ensure that the physicians successfully complete their training at WMC and return as full employees at PMC at the end of the program.

Dr. Baraguti, who recently completed a fellowship in pediatric ICU in Toronto and returned to work at the PMC where she is the Head of Pediatric ICU, outlined and discussed her training experience. Dr. Baraguti explained that she ensured that her career objectives aligned with her medical training choices. Her experience is a model example that can be adapted to the outreach training program at WMC. Dr. Berlowitz, Director of WMC, outlined the process of developing the pediatric cardiac department at WMC and how this example can be modeled at PMC. Dr. Hourri, Director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the WMC emphasized the importance of developing a residency program that will meet the needs of PMC before selecting future candidates from PMC for the program. Candidates must meet minimum medical training standards and complete medical internships in each physician's medical field of training. For example, the physicians training in cardiac surgery must complete



medical internships after the completion of medical school and then undergo two years of training in general surgery as prerequisites for joining the training program in cardiac surgery at WMC.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Committee agreed that each of the trainees' supervisors will submit a status report of the physicians currently training at WMC. This evaluation will be reviewed by the Committee and used to determine whether the physicians continue their training at WMC. Dr. Othman and Dr. Betawe explained that this review process will include an evaluation of Dr. Ala' Tal'at Fawzy Hasan, Dr. Abdel Karim Naji Adas, Dr. Ahmed Fared Zarour and Dr. Obeid.

Both Dr. Sasson and Dr. Houri explained that the current trainees are eager to learn but Dr. Adas and Dr. Zarour do not have the medical background and experience necessary to participate in a residency program in cardiac surgery. Dr. Sasson further explained that he has experienced difficulties integrating the Palestinian physicians into WMC training program because of Dr. Zarour's limited Hebrew. This has been a recurring challenge in training medical teams from the PA. While the medical personnel are provided Hebrew language learning opportunities, many of the medical personnel do not have an efficient level of Hebrew to fully participate in the outreach training program. Dr. Sasson stressed the importance of Hebrew as a prerequisite for training at WMC.

PMC and WMC concluded that a new training protocol will be developed by PMC and submitted to WMC for review. The protocol will include the admissions process for potential candidates and an outline of the specific medical specializations in the medical team. The program will be defined broadly as training in pediatric cardiology and include sub-specializations, including radiology, pediatric intensive care unit and cardiac surgery. PMC was asked to select the fields of training in the residency program. It is important to stress that the new protocol will be added to existing activities and, with the exception of Dr. Wreidat, none of the Palestinian physicians' training was discontinued following this meeting. All changes to the outreach training program will be submitted to and all possible future candidates will be vetted by USAID once the protocol is submitted and decisions are made by SACH and WMC. USAID will be informed throughout this process about changes to individual training schedules.

#### *TRAINING OF PALESTINIAN PHYSICIANS AT THE WOLFSON MEDICAL CENTER*

For pediatric cardiac medical treatment in developing countries to be holistic and sustainable, local medical teams need the facilities and skills to treat children in their own communities. At the center of the Heart of the Matter program lays SACH's outreach training program. The outreach training program activities are part of SACH's larger objective to create centers of medical competence in developing countries and to provide urgently needed pediatric cardiac care and follow-up care to children suffering from heart disease. The strategy is based on this understanding and we work with partner sites from around the world to build sustainable local capacity in the field of pediatric cardiology where children will ultimately be treated in their own community by local medical personnel. The training program was developed with the long-term goal of improving the access to pediatric cardiac care services for Palestinian children in the West Bank. Through this USG, SACH has partnered with the PMC, through the existing partnership with the PMOH, as the partner site in the PA.

During the first year of this USG, five Palestinian physicians, one female and four male, were trained through SACH at the WMC. The physicians are:

- Dr. Ala' Tal'at Fawzy Hasan – Radiology
- Dr. Naser Mosa Ali Wreidat – Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)

- Dr. Abdel Karim Naji Adas – Cardiac Surgery
- Dr. Ahmed Fared Zarour – Cardiac Surgery
- Dr. Khaled Ibrahim Zuhdi Obeid – Pediatric Cardiology

A progress report of each of the physicians was submitted to SACH and filed internally. The report includes a review of the skills gained and activities completed during the past year. Each report was signed and submitted by the relevant department head of each physician.

The request for increased supervision by PMOH during the third and fourth quarters has subsequently resulted in several changes in the outreach training program at the WMC. PMOH and PMC asked to ensure that all physicians trained through SACH in this USAID grant ultimately return to work at the PMC when they complete their training at WMC. The physicians' training program at WMC continued as planned with the exception of Dr. Abd el Karim Adas. In April 2014, the medical institutions discussed the status and progress made by Dr. Adas in the Cardiac Surgery department at the WMC. WMC agreed to allow Dr. Adas to continue his training for three additional months and reevaluate the progress in July with the support of PMC. PMC has asked to submit two new physicians for training at WMC if the medical institutions decide to discontinue Dr. Adas's training. In a meeting on June 22, 2014 Dr. Othman asked Dr. Darwaze discussed potential candidates and their credentials.. One of the new candidates spoke with Dr. Othman on June 25, 2014 and agreed to forward his CV to WMC for review. This information is still confidential and is for internal use and knowledge only.

On August 8, 2014 Dr. Othman met with Dr. Mohammad Abu Ghali and was notified that Dr. Wreidat has violated licensing agreements with PMOH. As a result, Dr. Wreidat will be unable to work for PMOH after completing his training at WMC. Dr. Abu Ghali explained that a condition for the outreach training program is that all five physicians return and work at PMOH hospitals after their training at WMC. Due to Dr. Wreidat's license violation, he is not qualified to work at PMOH and PMOH asked Dr. Othman to discontinue Dr. Wreidat's training at WMC. Following this meeting, SACH notified WMC of the training status and asked Dr. Wreidat to submit an official letter from PMOH, indicating training approval. Dr. Wreidat was unable to provide official approval from PMOH for his training at WMC and he was regrettably asked by PMOH and SACH to end his training at WMC.

Another example of PMOH increased involvement in SACH's outreach training program is Dr. Obeid's training. On September 1, 2014 Dr. Othman met with Dr. Abu Ghali and was updated about Dr. Obeid's training status because Dr. Obeid did not pass the PMOH medical license exam. PMOH asked that Dr. Obeid return to WMC on November 13, 2014 after he passes the PMOH exam. Dr. Obeid's training has been on hold since September 2014 by request of the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee.

Following the second Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting on September 22, 2014 PMC representatives met with the Palestinian physicians that were training at WMC at the time to discuss the training program at the WMC and to propose possible future employment opportunity at the WMC. The Palestinian team met with Dr. Hasan, specializing in Radiology, Dr. Adas, specializing in Cardiac Surgery, and Dr. Zarour, specializing in Cardiac Surgery. Dr. Hasan has begun her training at WMC in March 2013, and Dr. Adas and Dr. Zarour have begun their training at WMC in May 2013.

Dr. Hasan was asked to continue her training at WMC in the upcoming two years with the option of working at PMC once a week during this time.

Dr. Adas was asked to complete this year (2014) of training at WMC and then return to the West Bank and complete a two-year internship in general surgery. Successful completion of this training in general surgery will allow him to return to WMC and specialize in cardiac surgery. During this training time in the West Bank, Dr. Adas will have the opportunity to participate in Rounds at WMC. Upon successful completion of this training, PMC commits to allow Dr. Adas to return to WMC for training in pediatric cardiac surgery.

Dr. Zarour was asked to return to the West Bank and to complete a comprehensive course in Hebrew before returning to PMC for review. This review will be used to determine whether or not Dr. Zarour can continue his training in general surgery. This successful completion of training in general surgery will allow him to return to complete his training in cardiac surgery at WMC.

PMC explained to Dr. Hasan, Dr. Zarour and Dr. Adas that these requests are optional and contingent on the evaluation reports of the physicians' training. It was decided to continue the outreach training program for the four remaining physicians, Dr. Hasan, Dr. Adas, Dr. Zarour and Dr. Obeid through 2014. The Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee will decide how to continue the outreach training program following a review of the progress reports in the upcoming year. Since the first year of the program ended, it is important to note that the WMC has asked to continue Dr. Zarour's training in 2015. WMC's request was accepted by the Committee.

Since the end of this first year, PMC has also asked Dr. Adas to end his training at the WMC because he is unlikely to return and work at the PMC. As of January 2015, Dr. Adas's training is discontinued. The PMC has requested to continue Dr. Zarour's training and two new physicians are being considered by WMC to join the outreach training program in 2015. WMC is considering one candidate in the Anesthesiology Department and one candidate in the Cardiac Surgery Department.

Dr. Obeid has passed the medical exam in December 2014 and is expected to return to train at the WMC as part of the outreach training program in 2015.

#### *PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CONFLICT MITIGATION TRAINING*

SACH hired Dr. Levav, as a Consultant on Psychosocial Factors in Health, who brings substantial expertise and background in psychosocial health issues and cultural mental health to the program. His past work involves being the co-editor of "Bridges" the first Israel-Palestine health magazine, under the auspices of the World Health Organization. Dr. Levav worked in collaboration with Dr. Hoffman to modify the CareComm training manual and assisted in developing the survey to be used as an evaluation tool throughout the grant during the first year of the program. Dr. Jeff Hoffman, SACH's volunteer Expert Advisor on Conflict Management Aspects, completed the conflict mitigation curriculum and manual titled the CareComm training manual. Jeff Hoffman is a SACH Board member and developed the manual as a pro bono consultant.

At the start of this USG, Dr. Levav met with the Palestinian physicians training WMC and the Israeli physicians involved in Heart of the Matter. The meetings are designed to address cross-cultural medical interactions and the specific conflict-mitigation challenges the Palestinian doctors raise. The meetings are based on Dr. Jeff Hoffman's framework that was designed especially for the Heart of the Matter project. The framework includes four overarching areas: (1) Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity; (2) Dealing with Personally Sensitive Topics; (3) Effective Listening and Discussions; and (4) Helping Patients Manage Stress. It is important to stress that many medical students undergo this type of training as part of their studies. The Palestinian physicians explained that they rarely had an opportunity to discuss these topics and would like Dr. Levav to provide training in these areas.

The main focus for Dr. Levav with medical staff this year has been meeting the five Palestinian physicians. The consultation is a gradual process that aims to meet the needs of both Palestinian and Israeli medical professionals by meeting with the physicians in groups, and individually, to identify and address cross-cultural elements in medicine. The first step of this process is to work with Palestinian physicians and focus on their cross-cultural experiences at WMC. Dr. Levav is working to establish a trusting relationship relying both formal and on ad-hoc meetings. The entry point to the group has been psychosocial factors in healthcare, taking into account the heterogeneous background of the Palestinian population which is treated at WMC. A vivid example of this is the two group sessions that were devoted to the topic of “how to convey a bad news” and the different reactions the Palestinian physicians face in the PA. The physicians asked for further focus on this topic in future meetings because they often experience violence from family members during such situations. Another session on “stress in the training program” enabled the group to touch on issues related to the stress of living in Israel as a Palestinian. This subject has great potential to open doors to further cross-cultural conversations and on their experiences in Israel. Dr. Levav is fully aware that these issues require utmost sensitivity and the sessions are therefore a gradual process. Each meeting with Dr. Levav lasts for an hour and a half and the Palestinian physicians reported that the sessions provided them with tools to handle stressful situations. In addition to these sessions, Dr. Levav met with some of the physicians individually to address specific concerns.

Throughout the year, Dr. Levav and Dr. Othman have worked together to schedule sessions and contact the Palestinian physicians. Despite the amicable atmosphere in the meetings, the physicians found the frequency of meetings difficult. Dr. Levav has determined that monthly meetings replace bi-monthly sessions as originally planned. There were difficulties scheduling these meetings, however, due to scheduling conflicts and some misunderstanding among the physicians regarding activity times. This resulted in some physicians’ absence from meetings. Dr. Levav and Ms. Inbal Shaviv, the Development Director and Compliance Office of SACH, immediately addressed the problem by working with Dr. Othman and each of the physician’s direct supervisors to ensure that the Palestinian physicians attended future meetings.

Dr. Levav has worked with Ms. Shaviv to adapt the meetings to include Israeli medical personnel in the second year of the program. Dr. Levav plans on expanding his work with physicians at WMC by including Israeli physicians in the program. This training will align with the needs of Israel physicians and the changing political climate that effects their interaction with Palestinian patients and physicians. In addition to reaching out to Israeli medical personnel, Dr. Levav has asked to work with SACH staff on addressing cross-cultural and diversity challenges that SACH staff may experience in their work with Palestinian children and families as well as children and caretakers from developing countries that travel to SACH in Israel for pediatric cardiac care. All SACH staff will undergo training in cross-cultural understanding and conflict-mitigation in the hope that this training will make SACH staff more sensitive to the patients and caretakers, Palestinian and non-Palestinian alike.

## ACTIVITY 2: JOINT MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

### *INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONFERENCES*

SACH sent six physicians, three Palestinian and three Israeli, to three international medical conferences. Each conference was attended by one Palestinian and one Israeli physician. All international medical seminars for year 1 were completed in the past reporting period.

On March 6-10, SACH sent two radiologists, Palestinian Dr. Ala' Tal'at Fawzy Hasan and Israeli Dr. Alexey Yakhin to the 2014 European Congress of Radiology in Vienna, Austria. The physicians were introduced to cutting edge technologies and developments in the field of radiology. The event was attended by radiologists from over 130 countries. The conference provided the physicians with a platform to demonstrate how working for mutual benefits and tangible results can promote communication and understanding.

On May 21-24 Palestinian Dr. Khaled Obeid and Israeli Dr. Alona Raucher participated in the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association for European Paediatric and Congenital Cardiology conference in Helsinki. The conference focused on the topic of Univentricular Heart. The doctors requested to attend this conference because it is one of the most prestigious events in the field of pediatric cardiology. The conference highlighted the importance of cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian physicians to other delegates from around the world, including physicians from Arab countries like Syria. Dr. Obeid interacted well with the Israeli representatives at the event and joined them in activities outside the conference, including joint dinners and tours. These activities provided the Palestinian and Israeli physicians with an opportunity to interact and discuss issues outside the medical field.



Israeli Dr. Lior Sasson, Dr. Alona Raucher and Palestinian Dr. Khaled Obeid

On May 22-24 Palestinian Dr. Naser Wreidat and Israeli Dr. Ilan Cohen participated in the Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) & Euro ELSO 2014 conference in Paris. ECMO is a technique that provides respiratory support to patients suffering from cardiac failure. ECMO is frequently used during treatment of SACH patients at WMC ICU. The conference provided Dr. Wreidat and Dr. Cohan practical treatment information about ECMO treatment techniques. The Palestinian and Israeli physicians were interested in attending the conference because it dealt directly with their work in the PICU at WMC. Dr.



Dr. Ilan Cohen and Dr. Naser Wreidat at the conference in Paris

Cohen highlighted the importance of helping physicians attend international conferences as this keeps them up-to-date on progress made in medicine. The information from these events is ultimately integrated into the physicians' work at WMC and builds their professional capacity. Physicians from 65 countries attended the conference where they interacted in both a professional and personal capacity. Dr. Wreidat explained that the event allowed him and Dr. Cohen to learn from each other's experiences in the PICU. The Palestinian and Israeli physicians shared professional knowledge that they hope will be shared at WMC and PMC. The physicians traveled together in Paris and attended lectures and breaks together. The conference gave them an opportunity to discuss non-work related

topics and to get to know one another better. The conference program is attached to this narrative report.

In preparation for the two conferences that took place in May, and based on the non-formal evaluation of the conference in March, SACH integrated a monitoring system to examine the effectiveness of the international medical conference and the physicians opinions on jointly participating in such a medical event with their counterpart representatives. The monitoring system was put in place in May and integrated into the conferences in Helsinki and Paris. The monitoring system includes submission of photographs from the conferences and completion of questionnaires upon the physicians' return to Israel. The questionnaires are filed internally and are available upon request.

#### *LOCAL SEMINARS*

No medical seminars were held during the first year of the program. The two medical seminars that were planned were rescheduled to the second year of the program.



Group photo of the medical seminar, October 30, 2014

One seminar was originally planned to take place in July 2014 after Ramadan. The seminar was delayed to the first quarter of the second year due to the armed conflict during July and August and the Jewish holidays in September. SACH discussed the implementation of the seminar at the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting that was held on September 22. It was agreed that one seminar would run in October 2014 for 15 Palestinian, representatives of PMOH and PMC, and 15 Israeli physicians, representatives of WMC. Dr. Baraguti was asked by Dr. Othman and WMC to present a lecture during the seminar. PMC and WMC also agreed that Palestinian and Israeli physicians

present case studies they have worked on as part of the seminar. The seminar took place on October 30-31 at WMC.

A second seminar took place on December 18, 2014. The seminar was originally planned take place at PMC during a visit planned for WMC staff. The visit was scheduled to include an assessment of the equipment needs for PMC, outlined below, and the quality of the future pediatric cardiac care facility in terms of staff and infrastructure. This assessment will be part of the conclusions made by WMC regarding the outreach training program and the new admissions process for future candidates to be trained at WMC.

#### *JOINT PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI MEDICAL COMMITTEE*

SACH held two meetings of the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee during the first year of this USAID grant. The first Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee was held on March 4, 2014. The Committee participants included Dr. Yitzhak Berlowitz, Director of WMC; Dr. Ahmad Darwaze, Head of Cardiac Surgery at the Palestine Medical Complex; Dr. Mohammad Adie, Head of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at the PMC; Ayman Anaya, Head Administrator of Nurses and Doctors at PMOH; and Professor Tiberiu Ezri, Direct of the Operating Room at the WMC; Dr. Lior Sasson, Head of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the WMC; Dr. Sion Hourri, Director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the WMC; Dr. Wafiq Othman, Physician Coordinator for SACH; and Simon Fisher, Executive Director of SACH.



The participants discussed the following topics:

- Outreach training for medical personnel;
- Joint medical activities and medical consultations;
- Medical equipment purchase for PMC.

The participants agreed that the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee will adjourn once every three months and that activities will be coordinated with the Minister of Health, Dr. Awad, and the PMOH.

The second Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee took place on September 22, 2014 at WMC. The second Committee meeting was scheduled to take place in early June but was postponed by PMOH due to internal scheduling conflicts and needs. The meeting was originally scheduled to take place immediately after Ramadan but was delayed due to the violent conflict that continued into August and the unavailability of Dr. Betawe, Director of PMC, in August.

The second meeting included the following participants: Dr. Yitzhak Berlowitz, Director of WMC; Dr. Ahmad Betawe, Director of the Palestine Medical Complex; Dr. Ahmad Darwaze, Head of Cardiac Surgery at the Palestine Medical Complex; Dr. Mohammad Adie, Head of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at the PMC; Mr. Ayman Anaya, Head Administrator of Nurses and Doctors at PMOH; Dr. Flora Taher Baraguti, Head of Pediatric ICU, Palestine Medical Complex; Ms. Salam Alratrot, Head Nurse of Palestine Medical Complex; Dr. Aliyas Sorin, Head of Radiology Department at the WMC; Dr. Lior Sasson, Head of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the WMC; Prof. Tiberiu Enzri, Head of the Anesthesia Department at the WMC; Dr. Sion Hour, Director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the WMC; Mr. Simon Fisher, Executive Director of SACH; Dr. Wafiq Othman, Physician Coordinator for SACH; Ms. Tamar Shapira, PR Director of SACH and Ms. Shaviv, Development Director of SACH.



SACH, WMC and PMC representatives at the Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting at WMC on September 22, 2014

The participants discussed the following topics:

- Outreach training for medical personnel;
- Joint medical activities and medical consultations;
- Medical equipment purchase for PMC.

The second meeting fully established the cooperation between the two institutions. The mutual recognition of the program's long-term benefits and commitment to the program has allowed SACH to continue program activities into the second year of the grant. This was commitment was displayed by PMC which has asked, for example, that the institutions share responsibility and that future meetings also be held at PMC in Ramallah. WMC staff was enthusiastic about this possibility and the opportunity to help PMC develop a center of pediatric cardiac care in the West Bank.

The minutes from each meeting were sent to USAID West Bank-Gaza office with the narrative reports of quarter three and four.

#### *EQUIPMENT PURCHASE*

SACH is committed to support the purchase of medical equipment for the PMC and the WMC as part of this USG. Dr. Othman is responsible for coordinating the equipment purchase with the PA and the PMC. While PMC expressed its commitment to the program, throughout the past year SACH has continued to experience major challenges due to internal bureaucratic procedures, scheduling conflicts and delays made by the PMOH and PMC. On April 20, 2014 Dr. Othman met with Dr. Ahmad Betawe and discussed the specifics of the equipment the PMC is interested in purchasing. On June 27, 2014 after little progress was made in this decision, Dr. Othman met again with Dr. Adie and Dr. Darwaze to see how PMC and the PMOH can facilitate the purchase of pieces of medical equipment for PMC after Ramadan. Dr. Betawe agreed to finalize and approve the list in July, 2014 but the submission was subsequently delayed by PMC to the end of year 1 of the program.

During the second Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting, SACH, WMC and PMC discussed the purchase of medical equipment pieces for PMC and the need to coordinate the requests with PMOH. Dr. Baraguti explained that the PICU at PMC needs new ECHO cardiograph machines and requested SACH's consideration of this purchase under the current USAID grant. Dr. Baraguti presented SACH with a list of medical equipment pieces she is interested in purchasing for PMC. SACH asked Dr. Baraguti to submit three quotes for the medical equipment for review. Throughout the last quarter of Heart of the Matter program's first year, Dr. Othman and Ms. Shaviv held several informal conversations with Dr. Baraguti explaining the vetting process and protocol for purchasing medical equipment under USAID guidelines. SACH stressed that no medical equipment will be purchased under this grant without official approval and vetting from USAID. SACH is currently reviewing this request and comparing the list to the needs of PMOH and stipulations to its USAID and the EU contracts. A final list of medical equipment requests is expected to be sent to SACH by the PMC and the WMC in the first quarter of the second year.

#### ACTIVITY 3: SUPPORT AND DIALOGUE GROUP

##### *DIALOGUE GROUP SESSIONS*

SACH developed and implemented support and dialogue group sessions for Palestinian and Israeli families whose children are hospitalized at the WMC. The support and dialogue groups were led by the Palestinian Families Coordinator, Ms. Fatma Sarsur, with the support and supervision of Dr. Levav. While several meetings between Palestinian and Israeli families took place in the first and second quarters of the program, the activity was not officially monitored. The sessions from the third quarter were officially monitored and Ms. Sarsur completed quarterly reports which were reviewed by Dr. Levav and submitted to Ms. Shaviv. In total, 65 Palestinian and Israeli parents and caretakers participated in 22 Support and Dialogue Group sessions at WMC during the third and fourth quarters of the program. It is important to note that the hospitalization of Palestinian children is longer than Israeli children due to the type of medical procedures they undergo. For this reason SACH sometimes engages with the same Palestinian parents over a course of several weeks while the Israeli parents change every week. The aim of the dialogue group is to allow Palestinian and Israeli parents engage with as many parents and caretakers from the counter population. SACH was able to achieve this goal because of the different Israeli parents every week.



The dates of these sessions were:

- April 6, 2014
- May 5, 2014
- May 14, 2014
- May 21, 2014
- May 28, 2014
- June 2, 2014
- June 8, 2014
- June 15, 2014
- June 22, 2014
- June 29, 2014
- July 7, 2014
- July 13, 2014
- July 20, 2014
- August 3, 2014
- August 10, 2014
- August 21, 2014
- August 25, 2014
- August 31, 2014
- September 8, 2014
- September 14, 2014
- September 21, 2014
- September 28, 2014

The support and dialogue group activity was reviewed and redesigned throughout the past year to best meet USAID requirements and Ms. Sarsur's expectations and skills. SACH committed to implement 105 sessions over three years with three to four participants in each session. 22 sessions with 65 were committed in the first year of the program. It is SACH goal to include at least two Palestinians and two Israelis in each session. SACH aims to fully meet this commitment over the program's three-year period. It is important to note that due to the delay in the activity's implementation and the subsequent delay in an official monitoring plan for the session, this report including the actual outputs and outcomes of the third and fourth quarters only.

While SACH made progress in this activity during the third and fourth quarter, in both design and implementation, the program was not fully implemented during the first year. SACH implemented art therapy activities for families at the WMC in the past but this is the first year when SACH set an objective to include Palestinian and Israeli families in the sessions. This objective subsequently resulted in a range of challenges in



Left to right: Ismael's mother from Hebron, Mrs. Sarsur, Malek's grandmother from Gaza and Rinad's grandfather from Gaza at the dialogue and support session, September 14, 2014

recruiting Palestinian and Israeli caretakers for the meetings. The monitoring system, which includes quarterly reports and informal conversations among SACH staff, has helped SACH include new program elements throughout the past year with the aim of expanding the program to include both Palestinian and Israeli families.

The support and dialogue group activity underwent several changes in the first half of the past year. First, the Palestinian Families' Coordinator who is responsible for running this activity, Ms. Sarsur, was given additional responsibilities than originally planned. During the second quarter of the program, the Palestinian Families Coordinator took over the responsibilities of the arts therapist and ultimately replaced her. Additionally, the recruitment of two volunteer student assistants was delayed to the second year of the program. Due to the delay of monitoring and tracking this program activity to the third quarter, SACH concluded that it will be best to delay the recruitment until after the program is fully running and established. Moreover, SACH realized the importance of aligning the recruitment process to the academic year and exam period of universities in Israel, which begins after the Jewish high holidays in October. As a result, SACH delayed the recruitment process to the second year of the program when the academic year begins.

During the third quarter of the program, once SACH began to officially monitor and track the program outcomes, Dr. Levav raised SACH's attention to the difficulties Ms. Sarsur was facing recruiting Israeli families. In conversations with Israeli families during the third quarter, it became clear that Israelis are not eager to participate in these sessions because they have family support and often do not feel the need for a support group during their child's hospitalization. This explanation led SACH to speak with nurses at WMC and the manager of WMC's Children's Playroom to see how SACH can best engage Israeli families and encourage them to join the dialogue and support group sessions. The WMC's Children's Playroom manager suggested that she help speak with Israeli parents and that the format of the dialogue and support group change to better answer the needs of both Israeli and Palestinian parents. The Children's Playroom manager has been running a children's activity at the Children's Playroom during the dialogue group sessions, thereby helping ease the parents' stress of leaving their children alone at the Children's Playroom. After consultation with Dr. Levav and the Child Playroom manager, SACH changed the format of these activities to include an arts and crafts activity for parents as a way to engage them and begin a dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis. An important component of this new framework is that the sessions take place while the children are escorted by the Children's Playroom manager to participate in a simultaneous activity in the Children's Playroom. The parents' sessions take place outside the playroom facility. This way, the children are engaged in an activity while the parents can join Ms. Sarsur. The parents' activities are used as a first step to engage parents and to help facilitate a conversation between Palestinians and Israelis. The Israeli parents welcomed this change and are more willing and interested in participating in the activities. This challenge has also highlighted the importance of integrating a Jewish student into this activity in the second year of the program.



Palestinian and Israeli medical personnel and patients wait out a siren together at WMC during the Palestinian Clinic on July 22, 2014

There were other factors which also contributed to the difficulty in recruiting Israeli families during the past year. First, the Children's Playroom was closed during the summer vacation and only opened after the Jewish holidays. The director of the Children's Hospital has been a major asset in helping Ms. Sarsur recruit families for the activity. The absence of this component due to the summer vacation made it difficult to recruit Israeli families for

the dialogue group sessions. Second, few Israeli children were hospitalized at the WMC during the months of July and August. The few Israeli children in the ward resulted in very few parents and caretakers who could attend the activities. Third, the violent conflict that took place in the region during Summer 2014 significantly affected the interest of Palestinian and Israeli families to take part in joint activities. This issue was never vocally expressed by either Palestinian or Israeli parents, but Ms. Sarsur informally witnessed the discomfort of parents on both sides to engage with one another during this period.

It is important to stress that the Support and Dialogue Group activity has formal and informal quantitative outputs. Ms. Sarsur informally engaged dozens of Palestinian and Israeli parents and held conversations with both groups throughout the past year. SACH only counts participants that joined the group in its entirety and not for part of the session. Some parents join the group for part of the session but leave in the middle of the activity due to the child's hospitalization. Reasons for leaving include: meeting with nurses, test results that arrived during the session or a medical exam that takes place during the session. This is predominantly common among the Israeli parents because their child's hospitalization is most often for one day. Parents that leave during the session are not included in the actual head-count for the activity.

#### *CAPACITY BUILDING AND CONFLICT MITIGATION TRAINING*

An important element in the support and dialogue group activity relies on developing Ms. Sarsur's leadership skills and capacity to run the support and dialogue group sessions. Ms. Sarsur has been receiving guidance and support from Dr. Levav through one-on-one consultation sessions and reviews of internal reports of the sessions. While Dr. Levav met with Ms. Sarsur on several occasions during the first and second quarter, the meetings were officially tracked and monitored beginning in the third quarter of the program. In total, Dr. Levav and Ms. Sarsur held 11 meetings during the third and fourth quarter of the program.

The meeting dates were:

- April 29, 2014
- May 13, 2014
- May 27, 2014
- June 10, 2014
- June 24, 2014
- July 20, 2014
- August 10, 2014
- August 25, 2014
- September 14, 2014
- September 16, 2014
- September 30, 2014

Ms. Sarsur, a psychologist by profession and social worker by practice, has been working with Dr. Levav on how to integrate social work elements into the dialogue group discussions. Dr. Levav has been working with Ms. Sarsur to help her reach out to Israeli parents without the direct assistance of the Children's Playroom manager. Dr. Levav and Ms. Shaviv developed reporting schedule and template halfway through the year 1 of the program to help Ms. Sarsur report on the progress made in activity.

While SACH welcomes the assistance of nurses at WMC and the Children's Playroom manager in speaking with Israeli families about the dialogue and support group, it is important that Ms. Sarsur reaches out to Israeli families independently. Ms. Sarsur has submitted quarterly narrative reports on the progress in the support and dialogue group activity to Ms. Shaviv to better track program outputs and outcomes. These reports have also been used to help guide Dr. Levav on the topics and issues he focuses on during his meeting with Ms. Sarsur. The reports are submitted in Hebrew and are internally filed for confidentiality concerns. The reports are available for viewing upon request.

It is important to note that no meetings were held in July because of Ramadan and the early stages of the violent conflict that took place throughout July and August. Ms. Sarsur received consultation and supervision from Dr. Levav throughout July, which focused on the effect of violence on both Palestinian and Israeli families at WMC by phone conversations and emails. Dr. Levav focused the meetings on issues of trauma and how to best engage Palestinian families, especially those from Gaza, in response to the violent conflict during the summer. Dr. Levav instructed Ms. Sarsur on how to approach issues of trauma at times of conflict during the dialogue group sessions. This was important because several children and caretakers who came to WMC for treatment are from Gaza. Some of the Palestinian children and their caretakers were in the neighborhoods that were hardest hit during the conflict, including the Shuja'iyya neighborhood in Gaza. Dr. Levav explained that given the proximity of the conflict to these families, and the feelings they may have experienced during their stay in Israel, special attention should be given to trauma during the dialogue group meetings.

At the end of the fourth quarter, Dr. Levav and Ms. Shaviv worked with Ms. Sarsur to recruit two university students to assist Ms. Sarsur. The students, one Arab and one Jewish, both citizens of Israel who study at Aviv University, will help facilitate the dialogue and support groups and will assist with translation at Tuesday clinics. SACH received dozens of resumes from students from Tel Aviv University, Be'er Sheva University and the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Academic College and conducted formal interviews for the two volunteer spots.

#### ACTIVITY 4: PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Thirty one Seeds of Peace (SoP) volunteers participated in twelve volunteer days at the Free Palestinian Clinic Day at WMC during the past year. The dates of these volunteer days were:

- January 21, 2014
- January 28, 2014
- February 11, 2014
- March 11, 2014
- March 25, 2014
- April 29, 2014
- May 13, 2014
- May 27, 2014
- June 10, 2014
- June 24, 2014
- September 16, 2014
- September 30, 2014

Originally, and according to the Year 1 Implementation Plan, no SoP volunteer days were scheduled for July and August due to the schools' summer vacation. All SoP volunteer days were scheduled in advance during the first quarter of the program.

The volunteering program, in partnership with SoP, assists families whose children are undergoing cardiac care and treatment with their daily needs and provides them with much needed attention, while at the same time strengthens the cooperation and channels of communication between Palestinian and Israeli youth. All SoP volunteers have participated in Summer International Camp in Maine and have gone through extensive training through the "Bridging the Gap" Negotiation and Mediation training by the Harvard Law School.



Seeds of Peace volunteers and SACH Palestinian Families Coordinator with a Palestinian child from Gaza at the Palestinian Clinic on June 10, 2014

In an effort to maximize SoP volunteers' exposure to SACH's work and the value SACH places in their help at the Palestinian clinic, SACH introduced new elements to the SoP volunteer day during the second quarter of the program. This ongoing communication and new framework has helped improve the structure and organization of the Joint Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program. The volunteer day begins with a brief tour of WMC and a short introduction by SACH's Young Leadership Coordinator. The introduction includes a 5-minute film about SACH and a short ice-breaker game between the SoP volunteers. To watch the film about SACH, click [here](#).

SACH's Young Leadership Coordinator maintains ongoing contact with the SoP Israeli and Palestinian coordinators while SACH's Compliance Officer maintains ongoing contact with SoP's Director, Middle East Programs.

In addition to developing a new framework, SoP volunteers were asked to complete a short questionnaire about their volunteering experience at WMC. The questionnaire is anonymous and is used internally to help SACH monitor the progress and effectiveness of the Joint Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program. The SoP volunteers overwhelmingly support the program and would recommend other SoP volunteers to participate in the program. The survey found that if given the opportunity, most SoP volunteers would be interested in returning to WMC and working with the children at the Palestinian Free Clinic. Nearly all of the SoP volunteers knew at least one of the other volunteers that joined them at WMC. Several of the volunteers expressed their interest in expanding the program and helping more children.



A Seeds of Peace volunteer with Salam Abu Amra from Gaza, September 16, 2014

Through the Heart of the Matter program, Palestinian and Israeli youth volunteers have a unique opportunity to jointly interact with Palestinian families and children from the West Bank and Gaza, making this encounter an important interaction for both sides. SoP Coordinators explained that the volunteering program has made a significant impact on both the volunteers themselves and the families receiving treatment; the program eases anxiety of the children, an important element in hospitalization and medical care, and provides SoP volunteers an opportunity to work with local communities and put into action the leadership skills and lessons learned at the SoP International Camp.

Many parents have called SoP after their visit to thank the volunteers for their assistance.

#### ACTIVITY 5: CHANGE IN PERCEPTION SURVEY AND REPORT

In June 2014, SACH commissioned the survey company Midgam, led by Dr. Mina Zemach to conduct the external survey of Heart of the Matter under this USG. Midgam is one of Israel's leading survey companies that oftentimes conducts electoral polls. The objective of the survey is to understand the impact of Heart of the Matter on Palestinians and Israelis who have been involved in the program, and their opinions and attitudes towards one another. The external evaluation will analyze the following elements:

- The level of cooperation and communication between Palestinian and Israeli medical personnel participating in the program, including assessing the impact of participation in international conferences, seminars, work relations and cooperation between the physicians.
- The attitudes and feelings of Palestinian and Israeli parents and families of children hospitalized in the WMC during the program towards the members of each other's communities.
- The attitudes and feelings of Palestinian and Israeli youth participating in the SACH volunteer program towards the members of each other's communities.

The evaluation will be conducted with the assistance of Dr. Levav. He has supervised the formulation, design, field operation, analysis and write-up of the surveys since Midgam was commissioned.

#### SURVEY COMPANY SELECTION PROCESS

SACH approached the following three survey companies for the external evaluation:

- Midgam (<http://www.midgam.co.il/>)
- Maagar Mochot (<http://www.maagar-mochot.co.il/>)
- PORI - Public Opinion Research of Israel

Each of the companies was asked to produce a detailed narrative proposal and a budget.

SACH's compliance officer (initially Erin Falah, currently Inbal Shaviv) and Dr. Levav met with the companies during the third quarter to discuss the evaluation objectives. During the process, it became clear that the SoP Joint Palestinian and Israeli Youth Volunteer Program element of Heart of the Matter should be internally evaluated. Dr. Levav was assigned to run the evaluation of SoP.

Ms. Falah and Dr. Levav met with Maagar Mochot and Dr. Rozenblum and both Ms. Falah and Ms. Shaviv met with Midgam during the third quarter of the program. Dr. Levav joined all meetings along with SACH volunteer, Ms. Sarah Haverbeke, a Belgian pediatric psychologist by profession who was fully involved in the selection process. It was important for SACH to involve a number of internal staff members to get an accurate overview of the proposals.

In April 2014, SACH received three proposals from the companies listed above. SACH asked the evaluation companies to break down the narrative proposals into a table that was divided into the following elements: target group, survey method, quantitative output and the language in which the evaluation will be conducted. Each of the proposals also included a detailed budget and a similar desegregation process was conducted to compare the three budget proposals. Both tables are internally filed by SACH.

After compiling this information, Dr. Levav met with Ms. Haverbeke and Ms. Shaviv three times to discuss and outline the evaluation and to align SACH's interest and needs with the proposals. SACH selected Midgam to conduct the Heart of the Matter evaluation. Although Midgam's proposed budget was higher than Maagar Mochot, Midgam's proposal was significantly stronger and meets the exact needs and interests of SACH. For example, where beneficial, Midgam will conduct interviews of Israelis in Russian. This bonus exemplifies Midgam's deep understanding of the diversity of Israeli society and their capacity to run a large evaluation and is offered at no additional cost. SACH worked with Maagar Mochot on a previous survey that examined the attitudes of Palestinians who had been treated at WMC and this is a good opportunity to diversify our knowledge and experience in monitoring and evaluation.

Midgam reduced their final budget proposal after negotiations. They also proposed conducting the baseline survey using past public opinion polls and data it has gathered over the years and will approach external companies to obtain more data sets for the baseline. The proposed baseline survey is more exhaustive than the proposals submitted by the other companies. This is another indicator of Midgam's full commitment and understanding of SACH's interests.

By expanding the research, SACH will ultimately get a better picture of the Heart of the Matter's influence on the Israeli and Palestinian public. SACH signed a contract with Midgam in September 2014.

Dr. Zemach held two essential meetings with program medical staff from the WMC to better understand the Heart of the Matter program. On July 20, 2014 Dr. Zemach met with Dr. Akiva Tamir, Head of Pediatric Cardiology at the WMC and with Ms. Dawn Mizrachi, the SACH Medical Secretary. Dr. Tamir outlined the program, from a medical perspective, and stressed the importance of "do no harm" by implementing an evaluation in a hospital setting. Dr. Tamir explained that his priority is medical treatment and he does not have a political or social agenda in treating Palestinian children. It is important, therefore, to ensure that families feel comfortable in participating in the evaluation because they are at WMC for medical treatment purposes only. On September 9, 2014 Dr. Zemach met Dr. Othman and Ms. Sarsur and learned about their priorities in the program, specifically in the outreach training program and the dialogue and support group session elements of Heart of the Matter. Dr. Othman spoke about his experience with SACH and outlined the importance of non-invasive social and political questions in the survey. After the meeting, Dr. Zemach met with several Palestinian families at the Palestinian Clinic. The visit with Palestinian families was led by Ms. Sarsur who assisted Dr. Zemach in informally interviewing some families. Ms. Shaviv participated in and guided both meetings.

During the fourth quarter of the program, Dr. Levav and Dr. Zemach completed writing the questionnaires for each phase for the Palestinian physicians and Palestinian caretakers. Originally, Dr. Zemach sought to implement the pilot program of the questionnaire at WMC during year 1 of the program but this was subsequently delayed to year 2 because of the violence during July and August and the Jewish holidays of September. Dr. Zemach explained that the pilot was delayed because the violence is likely to skew the results and will not give an accurate picture of caretakers' experience at WMC and their opinion of Israeli medical personnel and families.

During the last quarter of year 1, Dr. Zemach submitted the document required to apply to the Helsinki Committee. In December 2014, the Helsinki Committee approved the external evaluation and Dr. Zemach and Midgam will begin the pilot phase of the program in January 2015.



#### 4. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA

SACH worked closely with local and international media and hosted visitors in Israel to raise public awareness to the program and USAID's support for our joint effort to reduce the effect of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis through the medical field. Since October 2013, 207 delegations and tourist groups from around the world, including groups referred by United States Congress representatives, Diplomatic delegations, Royal visitors, parliamentarians, the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs, AIPAC and AIJAC visited SACH. These delegations toured the program and learned about the support we receive from USAID. Tourist groups included university students from the United States and Europe who visited the SACH program and learned about our work and the Heart of the Matter project.

The following articles about Heart of the Matter were published during this past year:

- During October, the Jewish Times Asia published a story about SACH and the Heart of the Matter program. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- During October, United with Israel published an article titled Save A Child's Heart: Israel's Doctors Healing the World. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On October 13, RUDAW published an article about the Heart of the Matter program and SACH's treatment of children from across the Middle East. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On October 23, Woodford Liberal Synagogue published a news update on its website titled Save A Child's Heart – Visits Woodford and discussed SACH's treatment of children worldwide, including children from the PA. To read the post in English, click [here](#).
- During November, WMC published a post on its website about the Opening Ceremony at the British Ambassador's Hour. To read the post in Hebrew, click [here](#).
- On November 13, Bat Yam Local published an article about the Opening Ceremony at the British Ambassador's House.
- On November 13, Rinunim published an article about the Opening Ceremony at the British Ambassador's Hour.
- On November 14, TelAviv.net published an article about the Opening Ceremony at the British Ambassador's Hour.
- During November, the Jerusalem Post published an article about cross-border diplomacy and discussed SACH's work in the field of pediatric cardiology. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On November 23, Al Arab published an article about the Heart of the Matter program.
- On January 30, A London published a report on SACH titled Open Hearts.
- On February 2, the News Gazette published an article about SACH's photo exhibition that highlighted the Heart of the Matter program. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- In March, the Diplomatic Pouch published an article about SACH and the Heart of the Matter program. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On March 2, Voice of America published an article about SACH and its treatment of Palestinian children and children from developing countries. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On March 25, YNet published an article and report about the Heart of the Matter program and the outreach training program at the WMC. To read the article and watch the report in Hebrew, click [here](#).



- On May 26, the Canadian Jewish news published a story about Dr Wafiq Othman, SACH Palestinian Program Coordinator, who was invited to the United States and Canada to attend a number of fund raising and awareness events for SACH. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On June 22, JWired published a story about the SACH's activity of treating Palestinian children and training Palestinian physicians. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On June 25, CBN published an article about Heart of the Matter. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On June 25, Israel21 published an article about life-saving treatment for Palestinian children. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On July 6, Israel21 published an article about children from Gaza who receive medical treatment in Tel Aviv amid the rise of violence in the region. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On July 10, Walla News published a story about SACH's treatment of Palestinian children amid the violence in Gaza and Southern Israel. To read the article in Hebrew, click [here](#).
- On July 13, Haaretz published an article about Heart of the Matter and the treatment of Palestinian children amid the violence in the region. To read the article in Hebrew, click [here](#).
- On July 14, Israel21 published an article about life-saving treatment for Palestinian children during the armed conflict. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On July 16, the National Post Canada published an article about SACH's life-saving treatment for Palestinian children during the armed conflict. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On July 18, Breaking Israel News published an article about SACH's life-saving treatment for Palestinian children during the armed conflict. To read the article in English, click [here](#).
- On September 2, Montevideo Comm published an article about Heart of the Matter and treatment of Palestinian children by Israeli physicians. To read the article in Spanish, click [here](#).
- On September 4, the Jerusalem Post published an article about SACH's treatment of children from Gaza and Heart of the Matter. To read the article, click [here](#).
- On September 5, the Huffington Post published an article about Heart of the Matter. To read the article, click [here](#).

In addition to these articles, SACH sent newsletters during this past year to over 6,000 contacts, reporting activity and wishing happy holidays on Ramadan, Eid elFitr and Rosh Hashana. The newsletters included USAID's logo and pictures of a Palestinian child from the West Bank and from Gaza who were treated at WMC.

SACH has also continued to use social media throughout the past year to raise awareness to the program. In July 2014, SACH began publishing a weekly photo album called Every Child is Precious devoted to the Palestinian Clinic at WMC. The Facebook posts are updated every Tuesday and include pictures of children currently at WMC for treatment.

Throughout the past year, SACH also published Facebook posts on ongoing activities relating to the Heart of the Matter program. For example, a SACH Facebook post about the second Joint Palestinian-Israeli Medical Committee meeting received over 130 "likes" and 14 "shares". The SACH Facebook page, which credits USAID's support for Heart of the Matter, is "liked" by over 103,500 people.

During the first year of the program, USAID visited SACH twice at the WMC. On June 18, 2014 David Hunsicker, Senior Conflict Advisor and USAID representatives, Shirine Agbarieh, Maya Khouny and Jacob

Yousef Toukhy, toured WMC and met with the Palestinian physicians currently trained at WMC. The meeting also included a discussion with Dr. Levav, Ms. Sarsur, Dr. Othman, and Ms. Shaviv about the project's different components and progress. On June 24, 2014 SACH led a tour for USAID's Rachel Mines who is photographing the different programs that are funded through USAID West Bank/Gaza. Rachel visited WMC and met with Palestinian parents and patients and the Palestinian physicians training at WMC.

## **5. CHALLENGES**

### **FIRST QUARTER**

The most significant challenges faced by SACH during the first quarter included (1) accepting qualified candidates for the outreach training program; (2) ensuring that Palestinian SoP volunteers received permits to enter Israel and join their Israeli counterparts at the Palestinian clinic; (3) understanding the conflict mitigation components and USAID regulations in depth and their implementation in relation to the project, and ensuring all components of USAID requirements were understood and being met by SACH. SACH has also experienced difficulties in commencing the support and dialogue group activities during the first quarter of the program. Dr. Levav only began his work in the program and his meeting with Ms. Sarsur in the second quarter of the program.

### **SECOND QUARTER**

The most significant challenges faced by SACH during the second quarter included (1) permits not being issued for Palestinian SoP to volunteer at the Tuesday Cardiac Clinic; (2) understanding and ensuring implementation of the conflict mitigation components in relation to the project; (3) solidifying the design of the Support and dialogue Group activity so Israeli families join the sessions; and (4) ensuring that all components of USAID requirements are implemented according to USAID regulations, specifically in relation to vetting requirements. During this quarter, SACH continued to experience difficulties in recruiting Israeli families for the Support and Dialogue Group activity sessions. Dr. Levav met with Ms. Sarsur and worked towards solidifying the program by design a structure and template for the sessions but this process was only officially monitored from the third quarter onward.

### **THIRD QUARTER**

The main challenge faced by SACH during the third reporting period was working with and being supported by the PMOH. This challenge was coupled by the physicians' strike in the West Bank which further slowed down SACH's work with the PMC. In addition to the physician's strike, the administration at the PMOH continues to change, making it difficult for program continuance and sustainability. This challenge is highlighted by SACH's effort to work in cooperation and coordination with the PMOH and PMC through meetings and mutual activities which are ultimately delayed and cancelled by the PMOH. The political and security situation in the region further deteriorated during the third quarter and resulted in cancellation and delay of some mutual activities and meetings. For example, SACH's Executive Director frequently traveled to the West Bank up to the third quarter but has since been advised by our Palestinian partners to refrain from traveling to the West Bank. Due to security concerns, traveling arrangements and meetings were canceled and took place through phone conversations. The situation and the slow cooperation with the PMOH have also negatively affected the number of children referred and transferred to WMC for treatment. Due to PMOH's insistence that it will be responsible for children's referrals and the slow progress in SACH's work with PMOH, fewer children have been transferred for treatment at WMC since early 2014.

The deteriorating political and security situation has also impacted SACH's work with SoP which was highlighted in continued difficulties in obtaining permits for Palestinian SoP volunteers to join their Israeli counterparts at the Palestinian Clinic at WMC. This substantially effects the program's smooth implementation and SACH's ability to meet its commitments under the USG because Palestinian volunteers rarely attend the SoP events. Despite SACH's ongoing communication with SoP and USAID on this matter, the issue was not resolved during the third quarter.

In addition to challenges in obtaining permits, SACH has also experienced difficulties in fully implementing the Support and Dialogue Group activity as outlined in the PMP that was submitted and approved by USAID. As discussed above, while significant progress has been made during the past year in this program element, SACH is still having difficulty in recruiting Israeli families. WMC's Children's Playroom staff has significantly contributed to the program by speaking with Israeli families, but SACH is still unable to recruit Israeli parents without the Children's Playroom staff. Dr. Levav was made aware of this problem and has been working with Ms. Sarsur to help her approach Israeli families at WMC. It should be noted, however, that despite this difficulty and the political atmosphere during the past quarter, which was marked by the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli teenagers, Ms. Sarsur made exceptional progress in this part of the program and successfully implementing a dialogue group once a week. Moreover, nearly all of the dialogue groups included the attendance of at least one Israeli parent.

Lastly, SACH has recently undergone staff changes in the third quarter. Staff changes included hiring a new USAID compliance officer and a Young Leadership Coordinator, responsible for SoP volunteer days. The staff changes highlighted some of SACH's initial difficulties in understanding all USAID reporting and monitoring requirements as well as our capacity to raise matching funds for all program expenses.

#### FOURTH QUARTER

The fourth quarter of the USAID grant was characterized by the violent conflict and Muslim and Jewish holidays. These events significantly influenced the Heart of the Matter project and the frequency of activities. With the exception of emergency medical services that were available throughout this period, the outreach training program and SoP volunteer days that continued as planned, all program activities were delayed and postponed during the last quarter of year 1. This delay has resulted in fewer program output than originally targeted and planned. It is important to stress that despite the violence and holidays, SACH continued to implement program activities to the best of its ability.

The most challenging aspect of the program during the fourth quarter was working with the PMOH and PMC. This challenge was especially highlighted in relation to the outreach training program and the equipment purchase agreement for PMC. SACH's commitment to working with PMOH and PMC resulted in special attention given to improving the relationship and cooperation with both institutions during this reporting period. The increased attention inevitably led to increased awareness of the complexity of working with PMOH and PMC and the delay of program outputs. It is important to stress the progressive improvement in SACH's cooperation with both PMOH and PMC, and the cooperation between PMOH and PMC as two Palestinian institutions. While progress has been made in SACH's relationship with both institutions, progress is slow and the purchase of medical equipment was rescheduled to Year 2 of the program.

## 6. PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPACT

Performance Indicator	Type of Indicator- Operational or Management	Planned Target (Year 1)	Total Actual (Year 1)
1.6.2-12 Number of USG-funded events, trainings, or activities designed to build support for peace or reconciliation on a mass scale.	Operational	48	39
1.6.2-14 Number of people participating in USG supported events, trainings or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation.	Operational	134	107
1.6.2-14a Number of men participating in USG supported events, trainings or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation	Operational	67	37
1.6.2-14b Number of women participating in USG supported events, trainings or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation	Operational	67	70
PRP165 - Percent increase in positive perception about the other (measured in doctors and families of dialogue group)	Operational	15%	N/A
PI 1 – number of Palestinian doctors, male and female, who have trained in specific medical fields to develop and improve their medical skill	Management	5	5
PI 2 – average number of training hours for Palestinian doctors	Management	9600	9280
PI 3 – number of medical seminars held	Management	2	0
PI 4 – number of participants in medical seminars that cooperatively	Management	60	0

discussed relevant medical issues (disaggregated by male and female and hospital affiliation)			
PI 5 – number of international medical conferences attended	Management	3	3
PI 6 – number of participants in international medical conferences (disaggregated by male and female and hospital affiliation)	Management	6	6
PI 7 – number of meetings/visits that involved SACH/WMC staff and PMOH/PMC staff collaboratively working together towards establishing a pediatric cardiac care unit at the PMC.	Management	4	2
PI 8 – number of dialogue group sessions	Management	21	22
PI 9 –number of Palestinian and Israeli female and male family members participating in the dialogue group	Management	63	65
PI 10 – number of volunteer days	Management	18	12
PI 11 – number of female and male, Israeli and Palestinian, Seed Volunteers	Management	72	31
PI 12 – medical equipment purchased for WMC and PMC	Management	5	0